



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN WOMEN'S COMMISSION  
DETROIT

Susy Avery  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**What About Michigan Women Veterans?**

**There are nearly 50,000 women veterans currently living in Michigan. But, other than some U.S. census data, we really do not know much about them. To begin to build a knowledge base to initiate and/or support advocacy efforts on behalf of women veterans, the Michigan Women's Commission decided to conduct the first-ever survey of Michigan women veterans.**

**\*With the help of our partner, the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, and their analytical expertise, we are now in the initial stage of analyzing the results of the survey.**

**These initial learnings have been quite revealing, and we hope they will start a policy dialogue on how to address the issues that our brave Michigan women veterans reported.**

**For example, nearly two thirds of respondents experienced sexual harassment while serving in the military and more than one third of respondents experienced sexual assault or trauma while serving in the military. In addition, the majority of respondents did not feel they received the services needed to address their experience.**

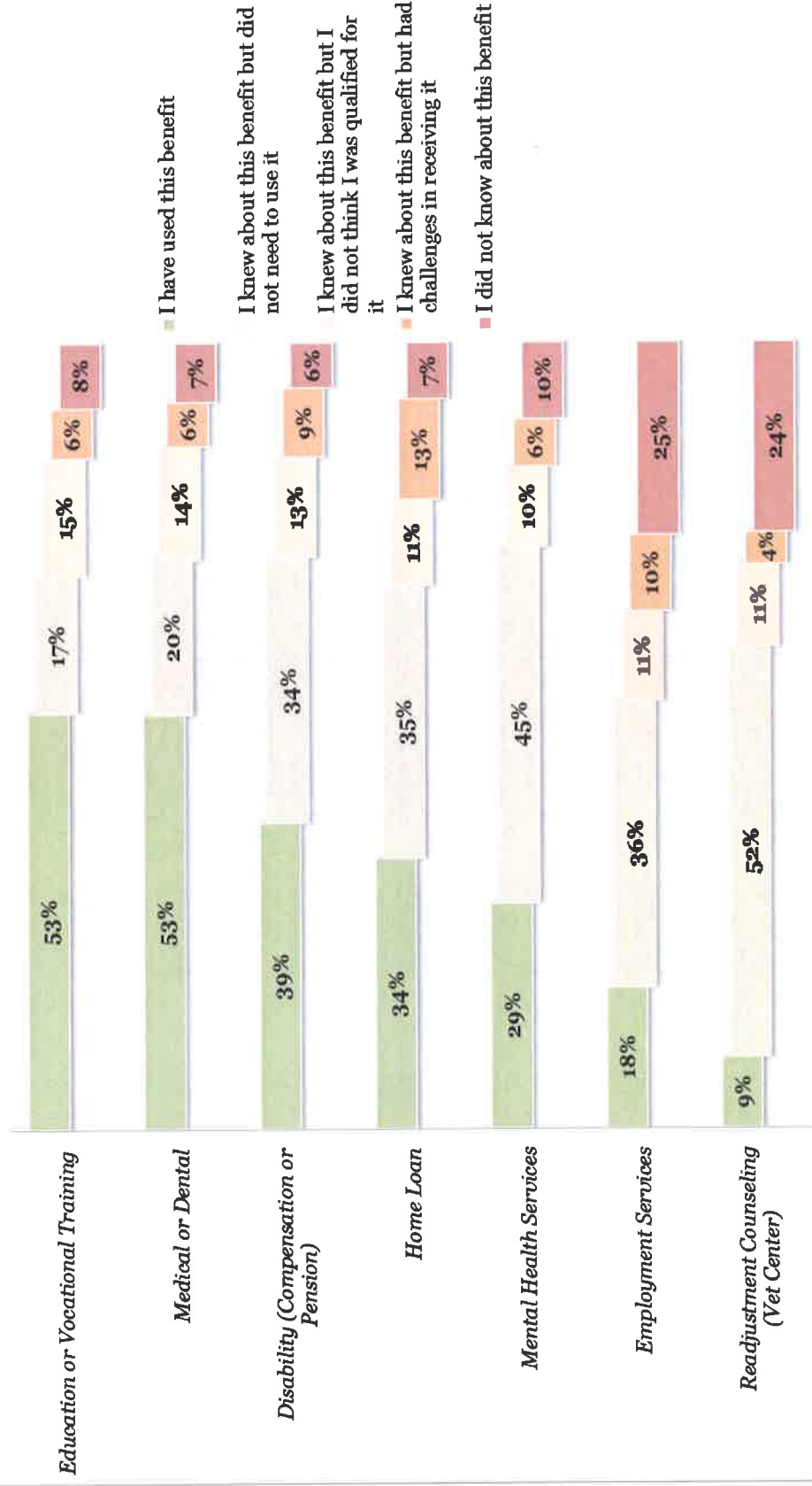
**We also learned that, of the nearly 30% of respondents who had experienced challenges finding housing since separation from the military, nearly half are currently homeless, or had been homeless at some point since their separation.**

**In addition, Michigan women veterans reported an unemployment rate of 18.1%, significantly higher than the state unemployment rate.**

**The Michigan Women's Commission will be conducting another follow-up survey in partnership with a Michigan College/University to further develop a strategy that will allow our Michigan women veterans to be able to say that our State of Michigan recognized them as heroes, recognized their challenges, and are helping them overcome any obstacles they face.**

***\*The Michigan Women Veterans Survey was conducted by the Michigan Women's Commission between July 1, 2014 and January 31, 2015 with over 425 respondents.***

## Benefits Utilization



## Benefits Utilization

- Education & Medical were the most commonly used benefits, and most were aware that the benefits were available
- Employment services and readjustment counseling were the least used, and a much percentage of respondents were not aware the benefit was available.

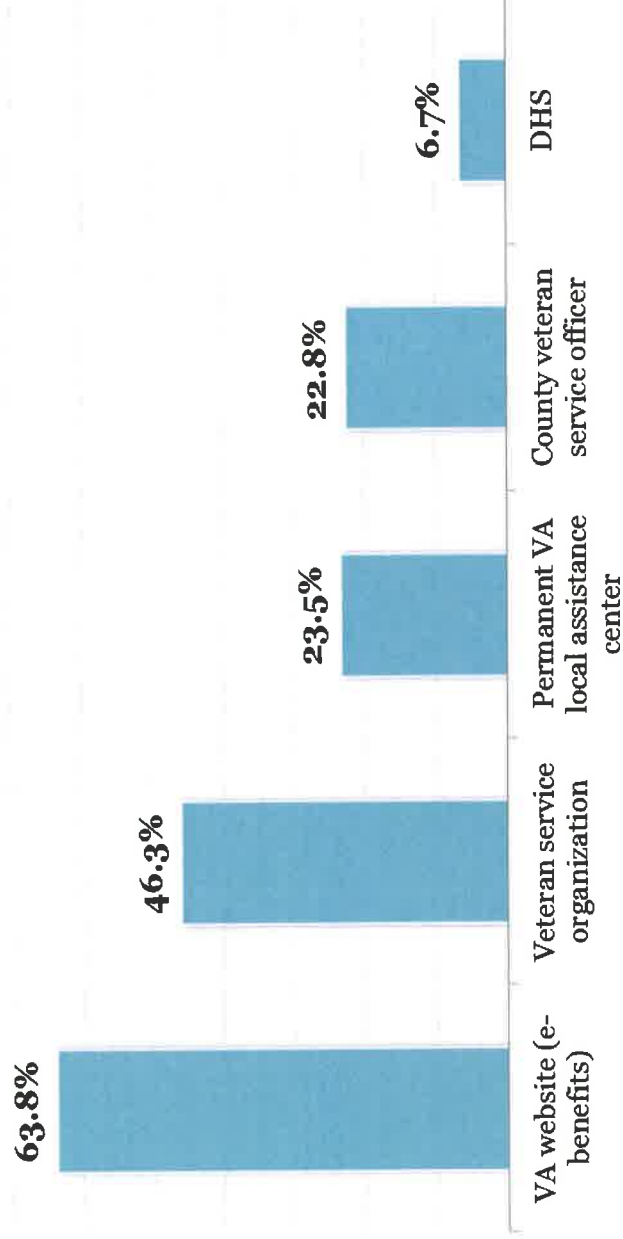
## Helpfulness of Benefits Information Resources



## Staying Informed about Benefits

- Overall, the sources of information respondents found most useful were in-person consultations or information obtained online and at informational websites.
- In general, the resources respondents found least useful were social media resources, such as Facebook and Twitter

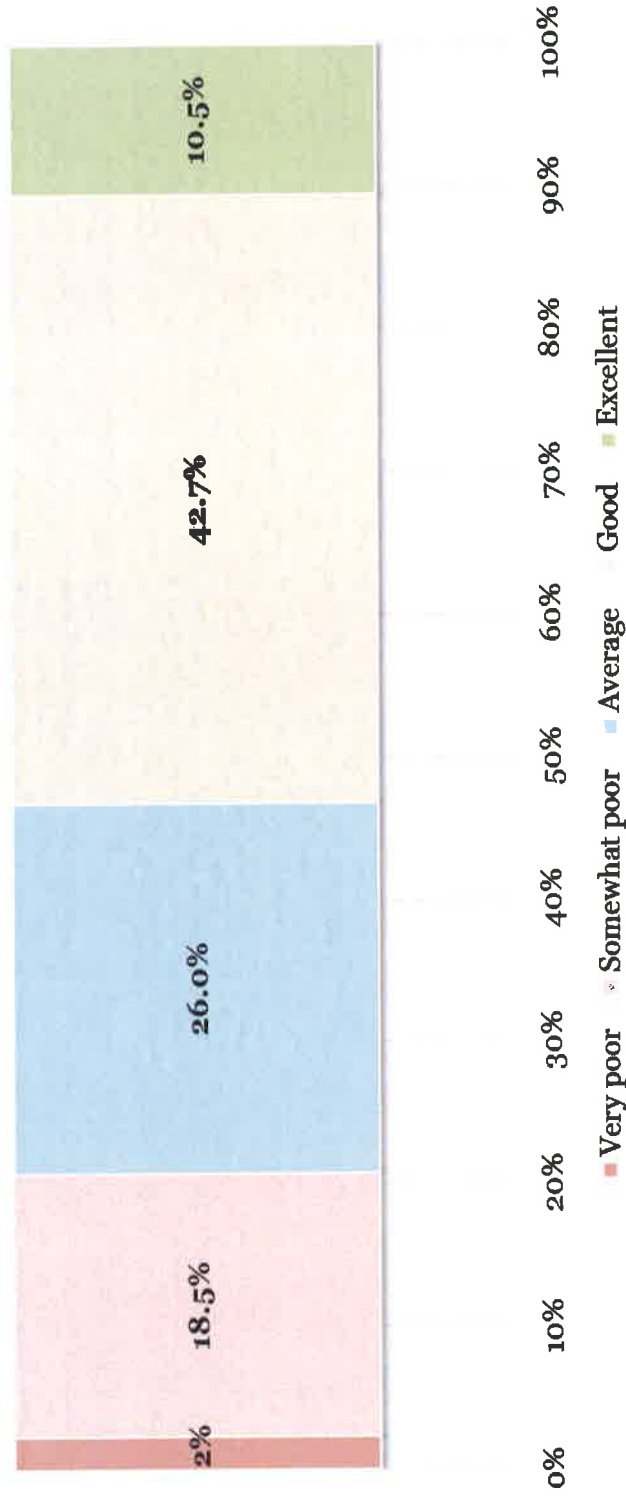
## What Organizations do Female Veterans Rely On to Stay Informed About Benefits & Eligibility?



## Staying Informed about Benefits

- Confirming the previous findings, Overall, the organizations respondents found most useful for obtaining information about benefits were the VA website and veteran service organizations.

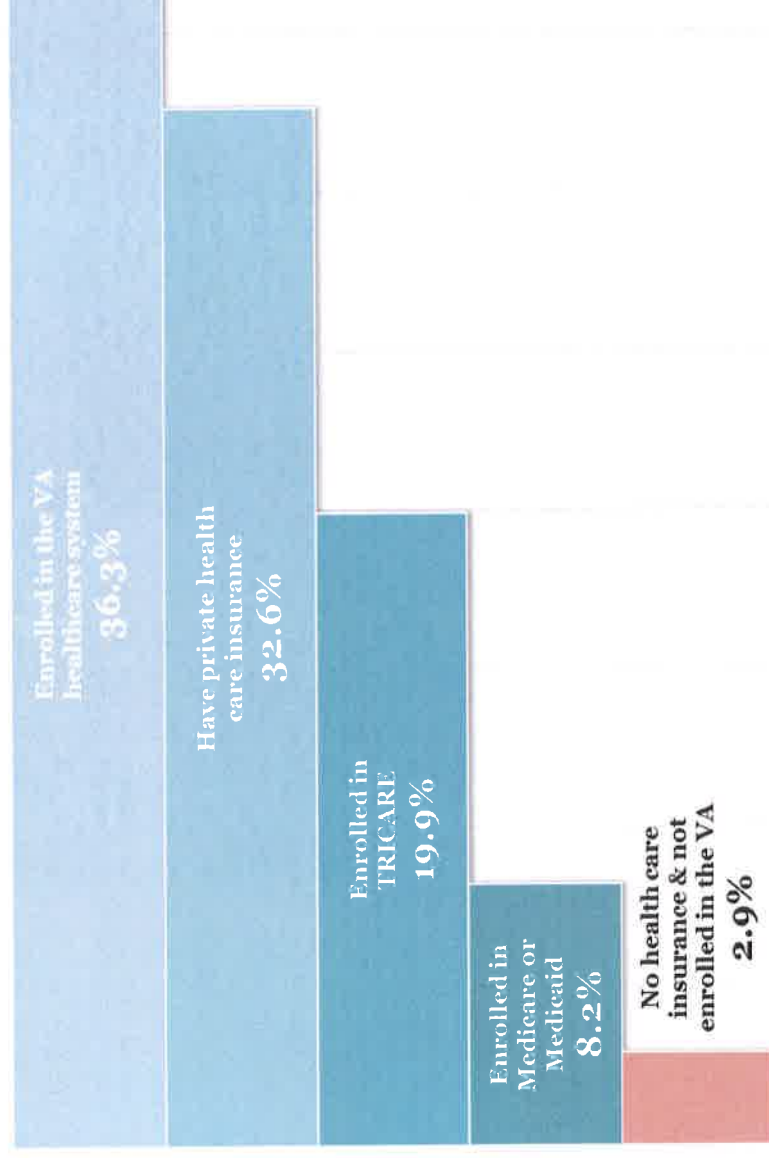
## Overall Health



## Health & Healthcare

- In contrast to what is typically observed with the male veteran population, over half of the female respondents reported their overall health as either "good" or "excellent." Less than a quarter reported their health as "poor."

## Healthcare Status

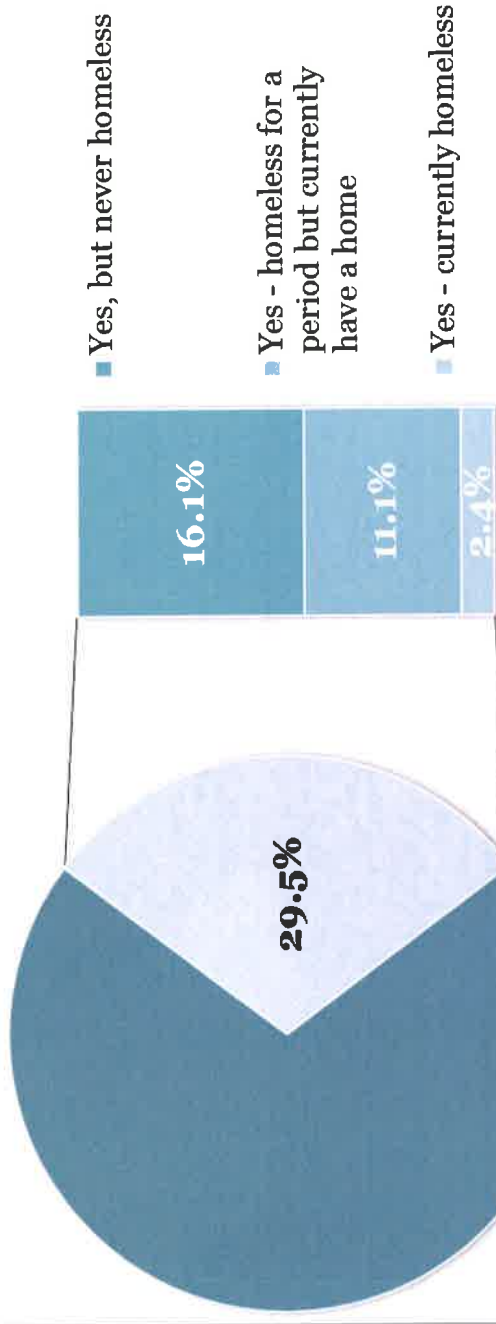


## Health & Healthcare

- More than one third of respondents were enrolled in the VA healthcare system.
- A close second for healthcare coverage, nearly a third of respondents had health care insurance through a private provider.

## Veteran Homelessness

*Of the 29.5% of respondents that experienced challenges finding housing after separation, almost half are or have been homeless at some point since separation.*

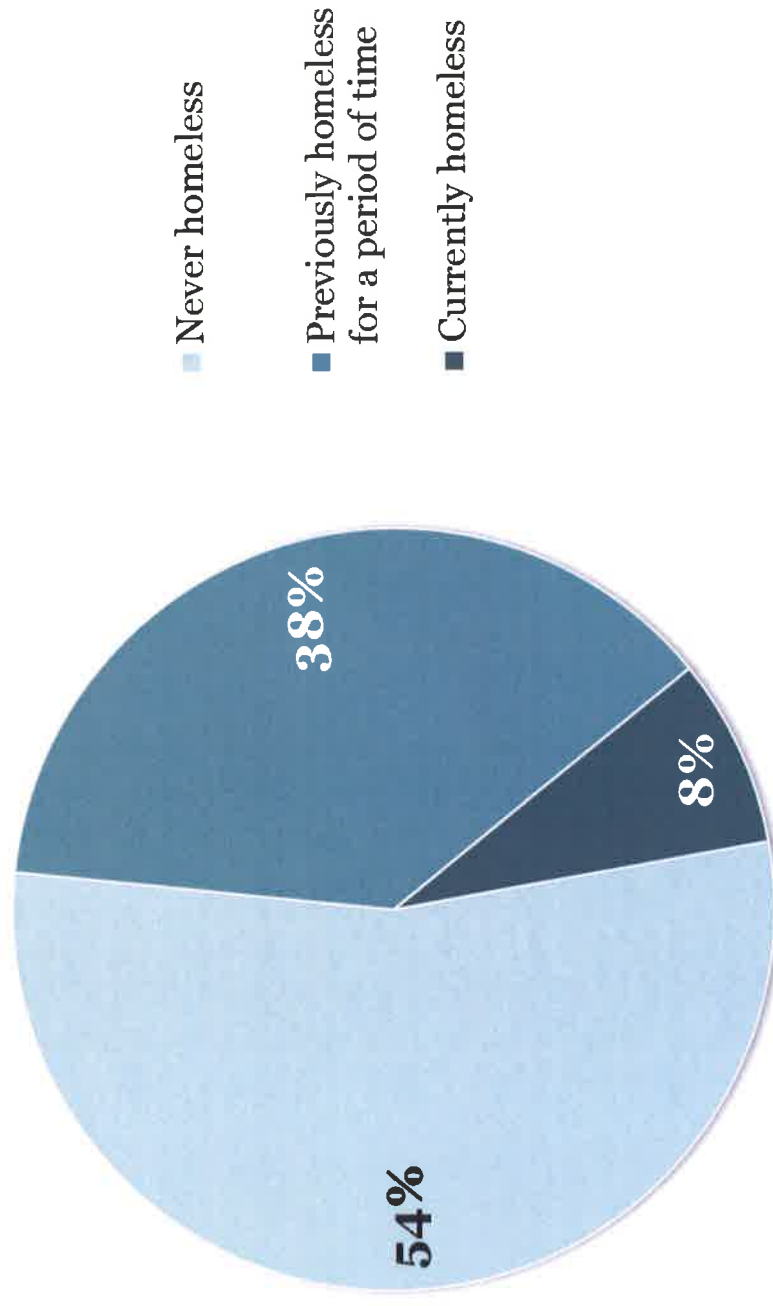


## Veteran Homelessness

- Of the nearly 30% of respondents who had experienced challenges finding housing since separation, over 45% were currently homeless, or had been homeless at some point since their separation.

## Veterans Housing Challenges

*Of the respondents that have experienced challenges finding housing since separation, nearly half are or have been homeless for a period of time.*



## Veteran Homelessness

- Of the nearly 30% of respondents who had experienced challenges finding housing since separation, over 45% were currently homeless, or had been homeless at some point since their separation.



## Employment

*78.5% of respondents were currently in the workforce*

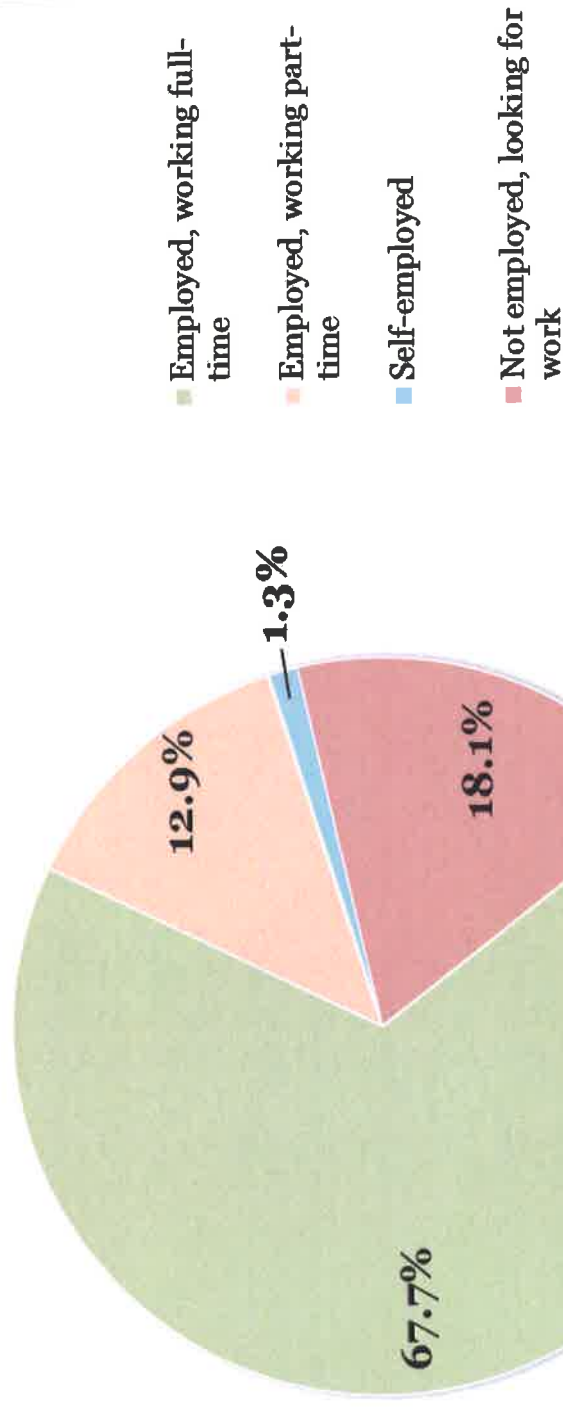


## Veteran Employment Challenges

- Although over 75% of respondents were in the workforce (ie: employed for looking for work), 14.4% of respondents indicated they were currently unemployed, demonstrating an unemployment rate of more than 18% in the population.

## Unemployment & Underemployment

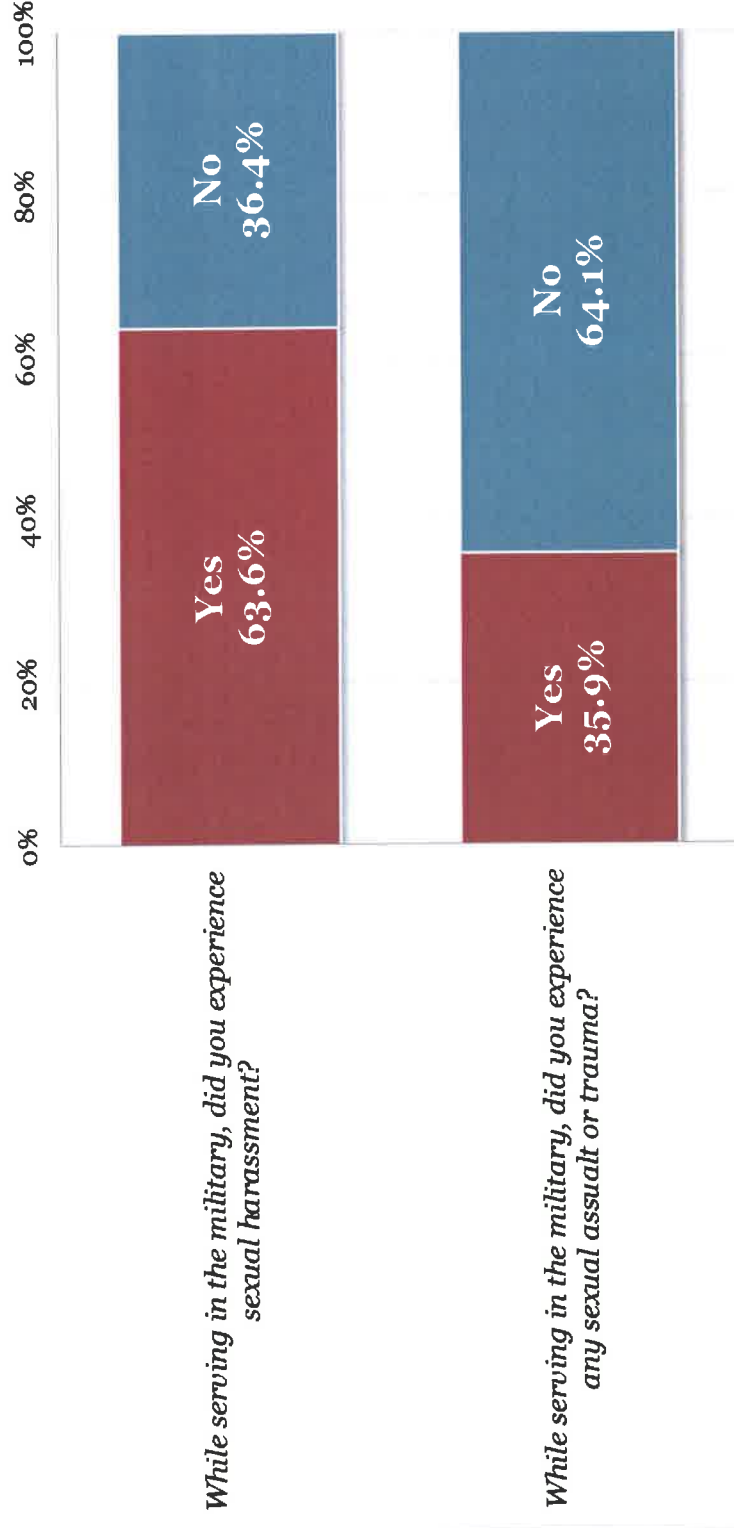
*The unemployment rate for respondents exceeded 18%, significantly higher than the state average.*



## Veteran Employment Challenges

- Survey respondents reported an unemployment rate of 18.1%, significantly higher than the state unemployment rate.

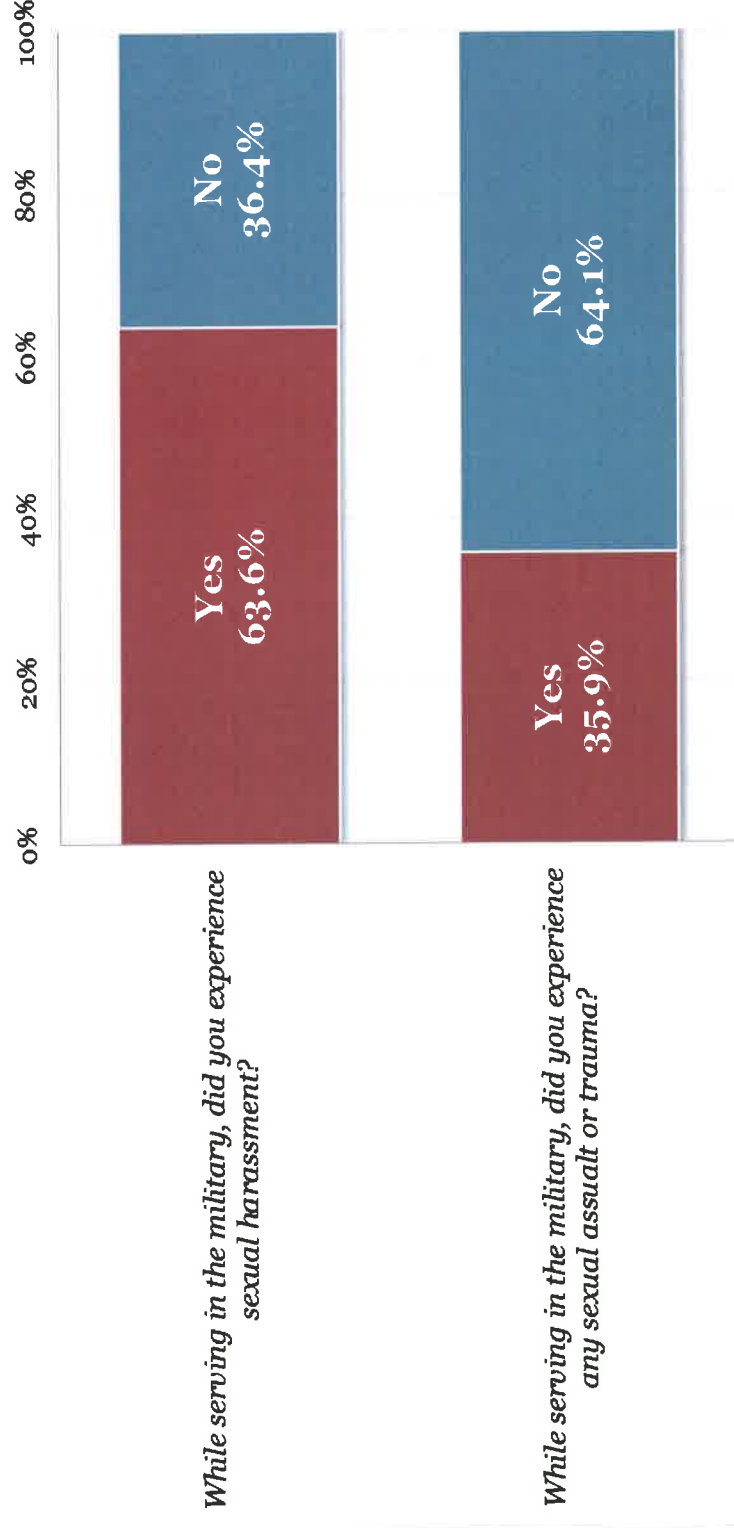
## Sexual Harassment & Assault in the Military



## Sexual Harassment and MST

- Nearly two thirds of respondents experienced sexual harassment while serving in the military.
- More than one third of respondents experienced sexual assault or trauma while serving in the military.

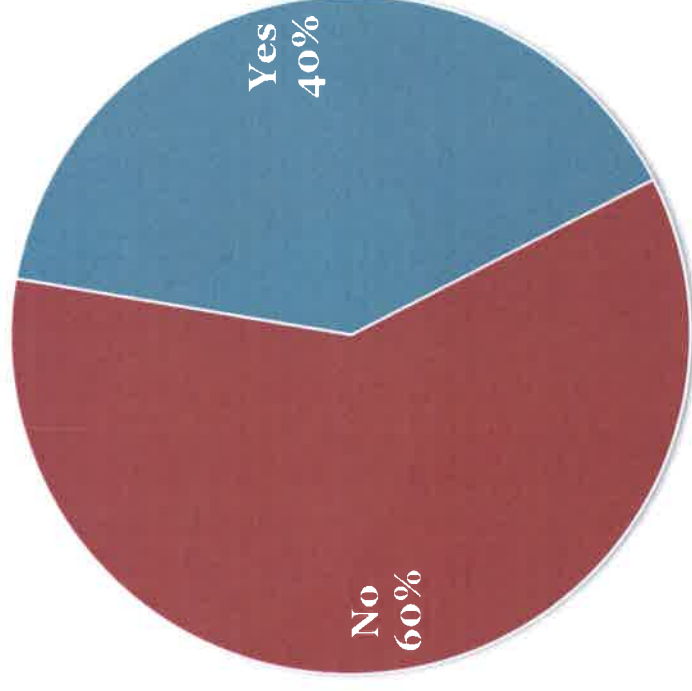
## Sexual Harassment & Assault in the Military



## Sexual Harassment and MST

- Nearly two thirds of respondents experienced sexual harassment while serving in the military.
- More than one third of respondents experienced sexual assault or trauma while serving in the military.

*Did you receive the services you needed to address your experience?*



## **Sexual Harassment and MST**

- The majority of respondents did not feel they received the services needed to address their experience.

## <p>2014 Michigan Women Veterans Survey sponsored by the Michigan

The Michigan Women's Commission encourages Michigan policy makers to consider women's needs in service development. We have limited information about Michigan women who served in the military, and depend upon national data to identify service gaps and preferences. Michigan-specific data will assist our advocacy efforts on behalf of Michigan women veterans. The purpose of this survey is to help identify the current needs of women who have military service.

Thank you for helping us to understand the current needs of women veterans in Michigan. These questions will help us learn more about your military background, your health status, and your use of various veterans services. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PROVIDE ANY IDENTIFYING INFORMATION.** Please be assured that the responses you provide on this survey will be kept confidential and your answers will not be reported by themselves. Completing the survey is **VOLUNTARY**. You can **SKIP** questions or **STOP** taking the survey after you have started.

By responding to this survey you are giving your consent for your answers to be used for collective analysis of issues that affect women veterans in Michigan.

The survey consists of 47 question and comment sections.

First we are going to ask you a few questions about your military service to gain a better understanding of how your service needs compare to women of similar military backgrounds.

### 1. Which of the following categories best describes your military status? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ I am an active service member
- ☐ I am a veteran (anyone who has served on active duty in any military service in any era)
- ☐ I am a reservist or serve in the National Guard

Other (please specify)

### 2. In which branch (or branches) of the United States military have you served? (Check all that apply)

	Active	Reserve
Air Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Army	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coast Guard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marine Corps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Guard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. How long did you serve/have you served in the military?

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 2 - 4 years
- ☐ 4 - 6 years
- ☐ 6 - 10 years
- ☐ Over 10 years

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Veterans from different military conflicts/eras have different needs. To try to get an understanding of how to focus services for different women veteran groups, we are asking you to select which conflicts/eras you served in. We realize not all conflicts/eras have distinct timelines and the service of many veterans likely crossed these categories.

### 4. In what time period(s) did you serve in the military? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Global War on Terrorism (OEF) (Afghanistan) - October 7, 2001 to current time (Afghanistan)
- ☐ Operation New Dawn (OND) - September 1, 2010 to December 15, 2011 (Iraq)
- ☐ Global War on Terrorism (OIF) - March 17, 2003 to August 31, 2010 (Iraq)
- ☐ Desert Storm/Shield - August 2, 1990 to April 6, 1991
- ☐ Vietnam Era - February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975
- ☐ Korean War - June 27, 1950 to January 31, 1955
- ☐ WWII - December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946
- ☐ Peacetime - any other time not identified above

### 5. What was your rank upon separation?

### 6. What was your occupational specialty/job classification upon separation?

Now we would like to ask a few questions about your life status so we can compare your service needs to other women in similar situations.

### 7. What category below includes your age?

- ☐ 18 to 25
- ☐ 26 to 30
- ☐ 31 to 40
- ☐ 41 to 60
- ☐ 61 to 70
- ☐ 71 or older

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**8. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?**

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ In a domestic partnership or civil union
- ☐ Single, but cohabitating with a significant other
- ☐ Single, never married

**9. Have you ever had a spouse/partner who was also a veteran/active duty member?**

- ☐ I am currently with a veteran
- ☐ I am not currently with a veteran but previously had a veteran spouse/partner
- ☐ I have never had a veteran spouse/partner

**10. How many children under age 18 currently live in your household?**

**11. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?**

- ☐ High school degree or equivalent (GED)
- ☐ Some college but no degree
- ☐ Trade School
- ☐ Associate's Degree
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree or higher

**12. What county do you currently live in?**

**13. How would you describe where you live?**

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Rural

The Federal Government provides benefits and services for veterans - mostly through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We would like to ask you several questions about benefits you have received or applied for from the Federal Government. Also, please give us comments that would help give further information on challenges you face or are facing in receiving these benefits.



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### 14. Are you currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, why?

### 15. For the following VA benefits, please check each one you have received/claimed, or, if not, please check the appropriate box:

	I have used this benefit	I did not know about this benefit	I knew about this benefit but had challenges in receiving it	I knew about this benefit but I did not think I qualified for it	I knew about this benefit but did not need to use it
Disability (Compensation or pension)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education or Vocational Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home Loan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical or Dental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental Health Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Readjustment Counseling (Vet Center)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify in comment section on next page)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 16. Please add any comments you may have about VA benefits.

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Veterans get information about benefits in many different ways. The following questions will help us identify the most effective ways to keep Michigan veterans informed of their benefits.

### 17. When you have a question about your VA benefits, what way(s) would you most likely use to access answers and help? Rate the following ways of communicating:

	Not useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful
Toll-free telephone number	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mobile apps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informational website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Printed materials/claim forms mailed to you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Downloadable materials/claim forms available on-line	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-person consultation (talking to someone at a veteran service organization (VSO) or a county veteran service office)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

### 18. Which of the following organizations do you depend on to keep you informed of your benefits and eligibility? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Permanent VA local assistance center
- ☐ VA website (e-benefits)
- ☐ Veteran service organization
- ☐ County veteran service office
- ☐ DHS (Michigan Department of Human Services)

Other (please specify)

## <p>2014 Michigan Women Veterans Survey sponsored by the Michigan

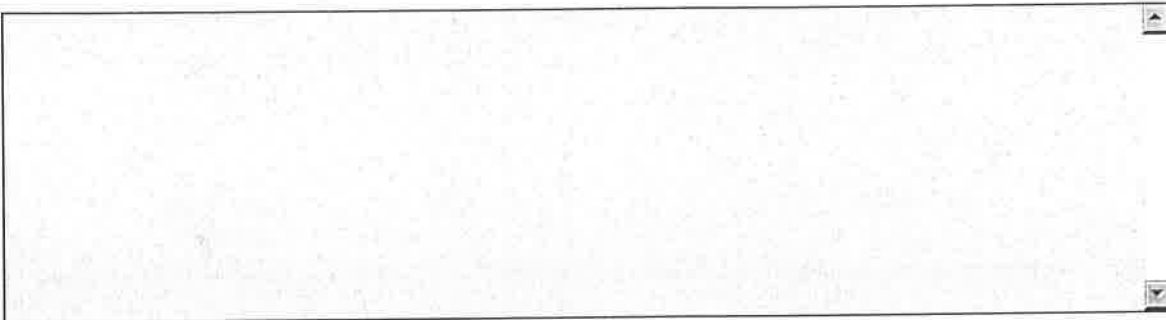
### 19. Do you know where your county veterans service office is located?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### 20. Have you used your county veterans service office for assistance/resources?

- ☐ Yes (Please add comments on your experience below)
- ☐ No (Please comment on your reasons below)

Comments:

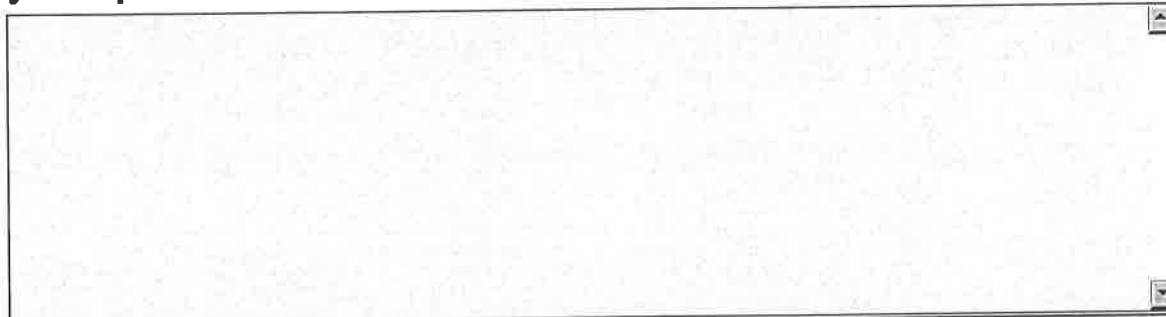


Now we would like to ask you a few questions about your employment status and housing situation since being discharged from the military.

### 21. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- ☐ Employed, working full-time
- ☐ Employed, working part-time
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Stay at home parent
- ☐ Not employed, looking for work
- ☐ Not employed, NOT looking for work
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Disabled, not able to work

### 22. If you had/are having difficulties finding employment post discharge, please describe your experience:

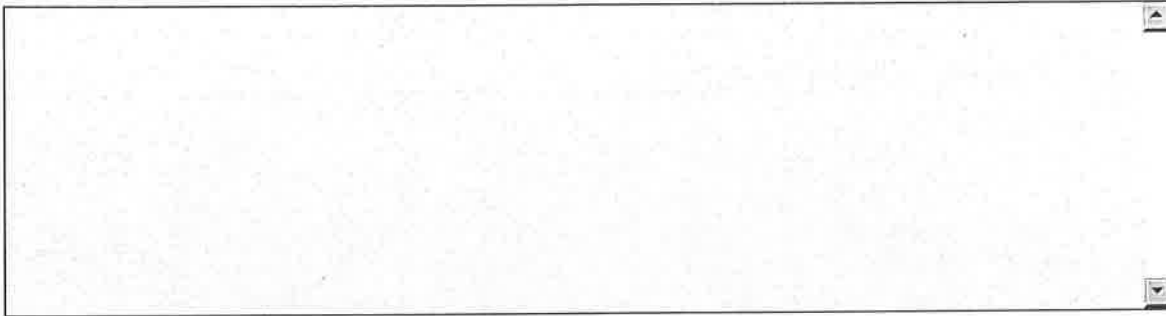


## <p>2014 Michigan Women Veterans Survey sponsored by the Michigan

### 23. Have you ever used Michigan Works or other state employment services?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No - did not know about services
- ☐ No - do not need assistance

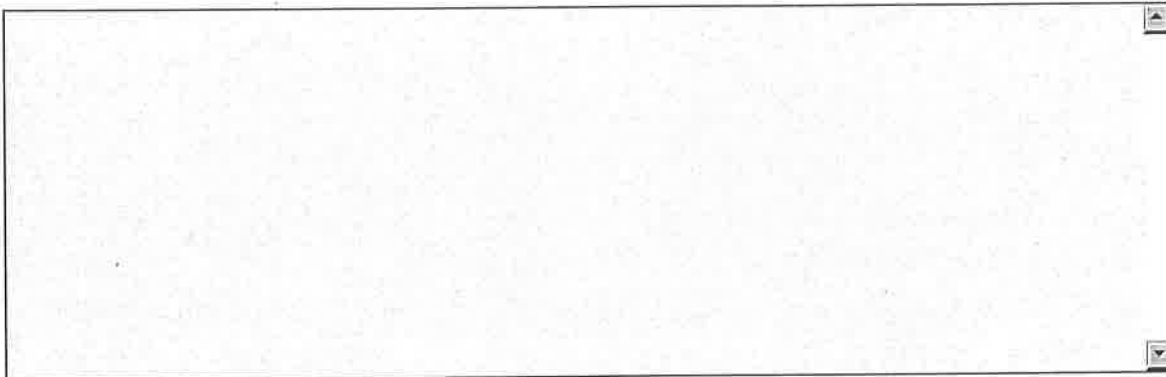
Comments:



### 24. Since your separation from the military have you had problems with housing?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, but never homeless
- ☐ Yes - homeless for a period but currently have a home
- ☐ Yes - currently homeless

### 25. If you have experienced or are currently experiencing housing difficulties, please share your experiences:



Many veterans experience challenges because of medical conditions associated with their time of service. The following questions relate to your general health, medical history, and whether any of your current medical needs are service-related. As with all of your answers, the responses to these questions will be kept confidential.

**<p>2014 Michigan Women Veterans Survey sponsored by the Michigan**

**26. In general, how would you rate your overall health?**

- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Somewhat poor
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

**27. Do you currently have a disability rating from the VA?**

- ☐ I do not have a service-related disability
- ☐ I have a service-related disability but have not yet filed for a disability rating from the VA
- ☐ I have a service-related disability and have filed for a disability rating from the VA but have not received my disability rating yet
- ☐ I have a service-related disability from the VA

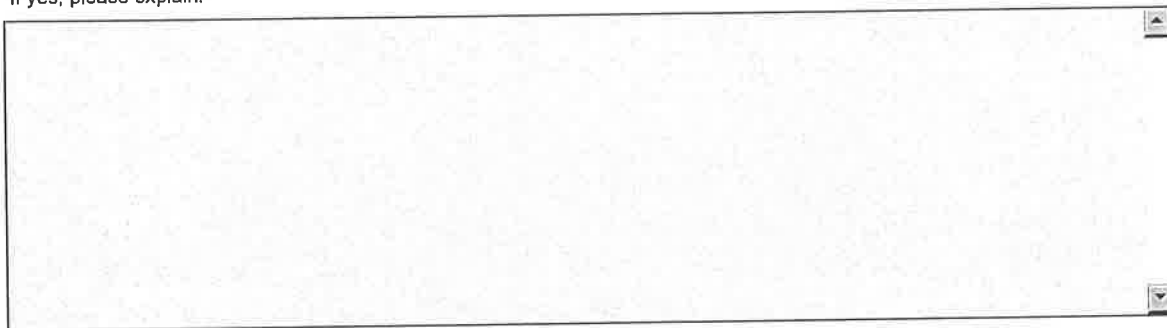
**28. If you have a service-related disability from the VA, please indicate the percentage:**

- ☐ 0%      ☐ 10%      ☐ 20%      ☐ 30%      ☐ 40%      ☐ 50 - 90%      ☐ 100%

**29. While serving in the military, did you experience problems or trauma related to your assigned duties?**

- ☐ Yes - Noncombat related
- ☐ Yes - Combat related
- ☐ NO

If yes, please explain:



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**30. For the following list of medical conditions, check which ones currently impact your health status. Please indicate if the condition is service related.**

**(Please scroll down the page for full list)**

	Currently Affecting My Health Status	Service Related
Amputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head injuries (including closed-head trauma)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Musculoskeletal disorders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjusting to physical limitations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cardiac issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lung problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gynecological problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleep disorders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medication abuse/addiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug abuse/addiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol abuse/addiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Assault/Military Sexual Trauma	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stressors of single parenting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilty for leaving family for deployment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify in comment section)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

## <p>2014 Michigan Women Veterans Survey sponsored by the Michigan

The Veterans Administration (VA) has medical facilities throughout Michigan to care for veterans' health. The following questions seek to understand your utilization and views on VA facilities.

**31. If you have ever used the services of the Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals or clinics, please rate (in general) your experience of the services you received.**

- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Great
- ☐ I have never used the services of the VA hospitals or clinics

Please explain the reason for your rating and specify what the VA could do to improve the experience:

**32. If you have never sought or are not currently using medical services at a VA facility, which of the following statements best describes why not? Please rank your answers, from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important).**

<input type="text"/>	Prefer to use non-VA facility
<input type="text"/>	Not eligible for service
<input type="text"/>	Poor service or quality of care
<input type="text"/>	Lack of transportation
<input type="text"/>	Appointment/scheduling delays
<input type="text"/>	Facility is too far from residence

**<p>2014 Michigan Women Veterans Survey sponsored by the Michigan**

**33. Which of the following best describes your health care status?**

- ☐ I am currently enrolled in the VA Healthcare System
- ☐ I am currently enrolled in TRICARE
- ☐ I have private health care insurance
- ☐ I am enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid
- ☐ I do not have health care insurance and I am not enrolled in the VA

**34. How far do you live from the closest VA medical facility or community based outpatient clinic (CBOC)??**

- ☐ Under 10 miles      ☐ 10-30 miles      ☐ 30-60 miles      ☐ Over 60 miles      ☐ I don't know

**35. Given your means of transportation, would you consider the closest VA medical facility to be:**

- ☐ Very Accessible      ☐ Somewhat Accessible      ☐ Not Accessible      ☐ I don't know how accessible it is

**36. Based on your general perception of and satisfaction level with women veteran's health care and other benefits delivered through the VA system, how would you rank the equipment and space provided for treatment and overall care?**

- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Great
- ☐ I have never used the services of the VA hospitals or clinics

We know from numerous studies that many women veterans have experienced sexual assault both prior to service and during their service. We also know from prior studies that women veteran face challenges getting the services they need after experiencing sexual assault. The following series of questions will help us understand the needs of women veterans who have experienced military sexual assault and/or trauma.



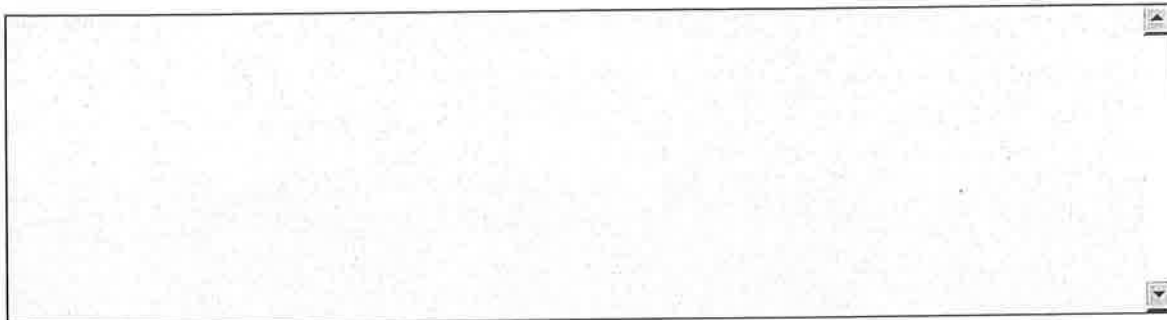
**<p>2014 Michigan Women Veterans Survey sponsored by the Michigan**

**37. While serving in the military, did you experience sexual harassment?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments:



**38. If you did experience sexual harassment, did you seek: (Check all that apply)**

☐ Legal remedies/services

☐ Medical remedies/services

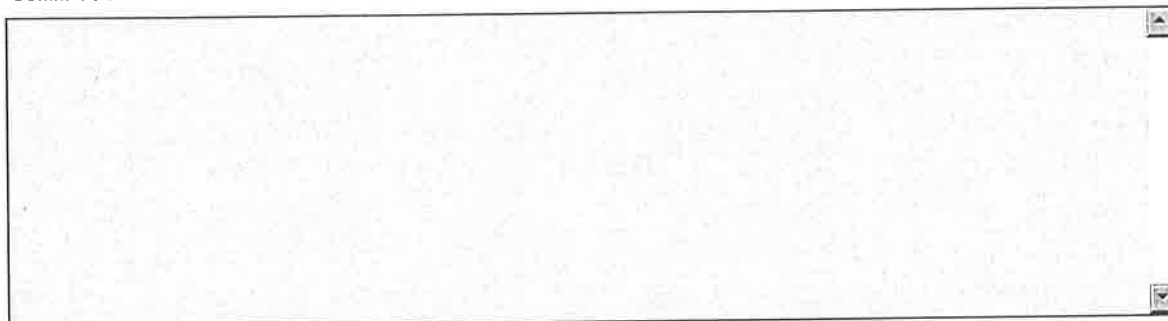
☐ Mental health remedies/services

**39. While serving in the military, did you experience any sexual assault or trauma?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments:



**40. If you did experience such assault or trauma, did you seek: (Check all that apply)**

☐ Legal remedies/services

☐ Medical remedies/services

☐ Mental health remedies/services

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**41. If you sought treatment for this trauma, how long after the first incident did you seek treatment and where?**

How long after?

Where?

**42. Did you feel you received the services you needed?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments:

**43. Prior to joining the military, did you experience emotional or physical neglect or abuse, or sexual assault/abuse?**

☐ Yes

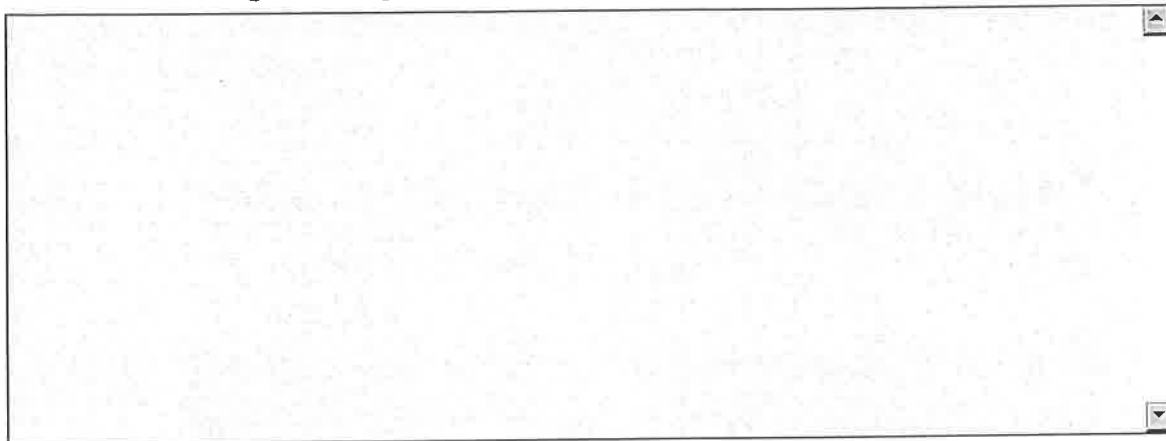
☐ No

Comments:

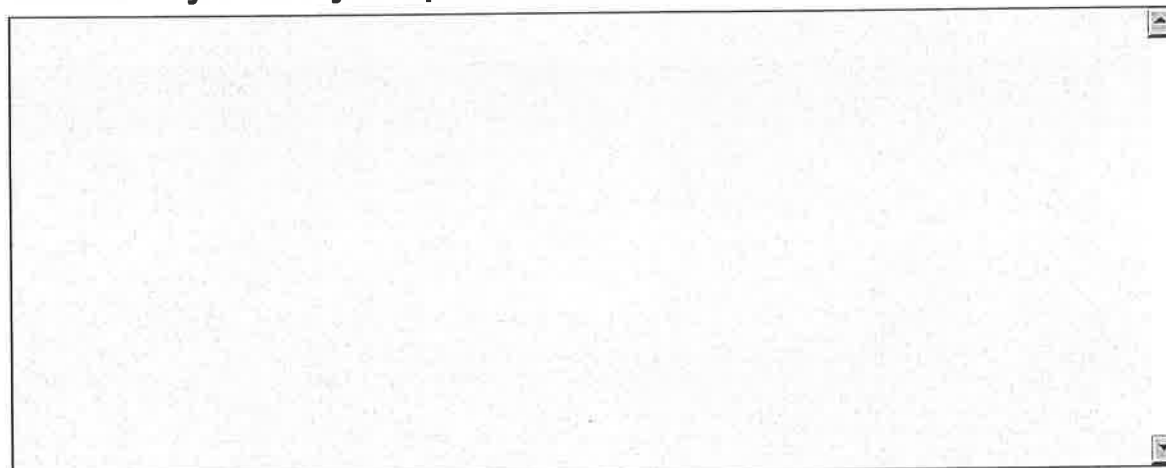
The final few questions focus on your service needs as a woman veteran, and how we can better serve those needs.

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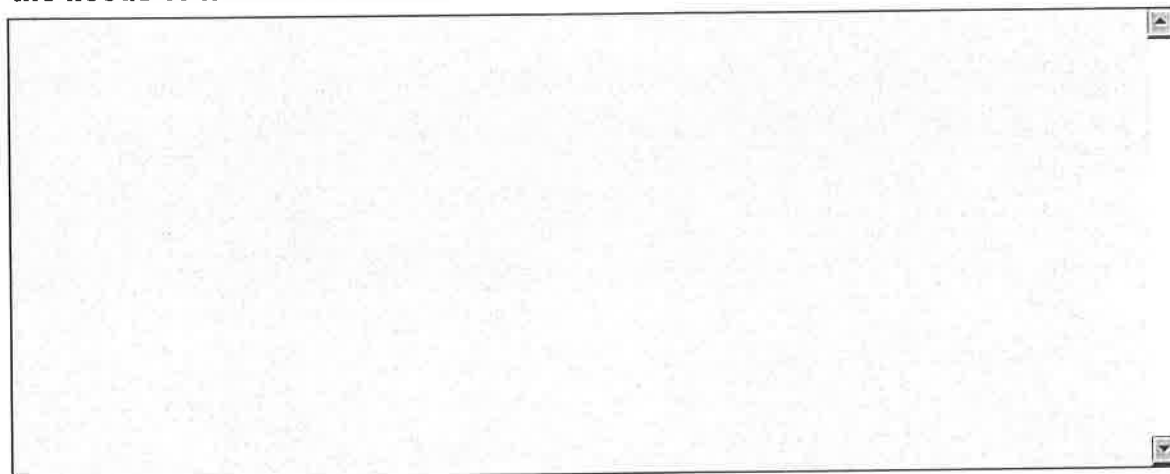
**44. What challenges have you had making the transition from active duty?**



**45. What information or services would have been beneficial to you, had they been available to you when you separated/transitioned from active duty?**

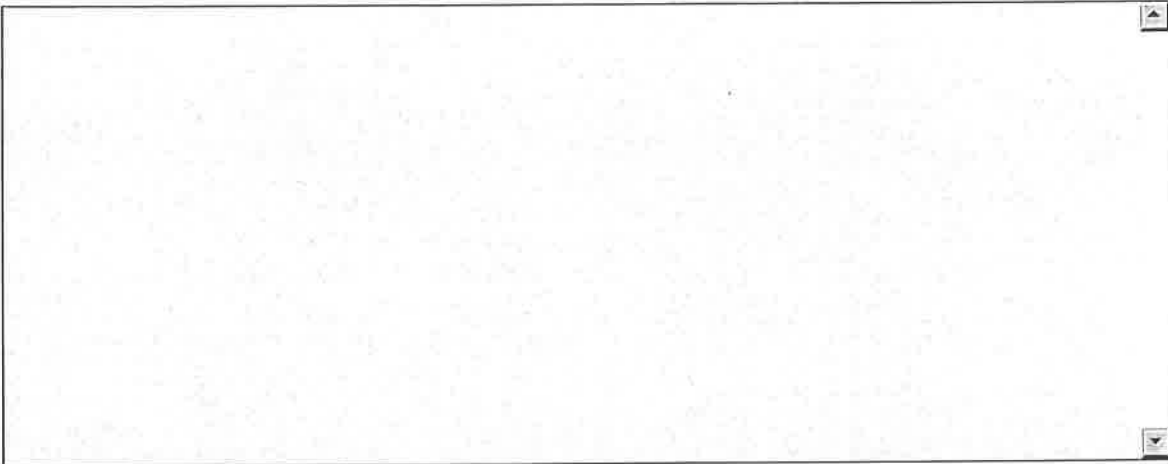


**46. What services do you need? What services or benefits should be provided to address the needs of women veterans?**



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### 47. Is there anything else you'd like to share?



Thank you very much for your participation. We know some of the questions may have been difficult to answer. If you would like to talk to someone, please call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Survey results will be shared on the Michigan Women's Commission website, [www.michigan.gov/womenscommission](http://www.michigan.gov/womenscommission) , when they become available. There is a link to the survey, as well.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at by email at [mdcr-womenscomm@michigan.gov](mailto:mdcr-womenscomm@michigan.gov) or phone us at 313-456-4702.



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN WOMEN'S COMMISSION

**SUSAN AVERY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CADILLAC PLACE  
3054 WEST GRAND BOULEVARD  
SUITE 3-600  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202

PHONE: 313-456-3802  
E-MAIL: [averys3@michigan.gov](mailto:averys3@michigan.gov)  
[www.michigan.gov/womenscommission](http://www.michigan.gov/womenscommission)

## What Does the Michigan Women's Commission Do?

### Clare County Veterans Services

225 West Main Street  
Harrison, Michigan 48625

*Helping American Heroes..Past..Present..and Future since 1965*

#### RENEE HALEY, DIRECTOR

Office: 989-539-3273

Fax: 989-539-4925

E-mail: [haley@clareco.net](mailto:haley@clareco.net)

Established by statute in 1968, the Michigan Women's Commission focuses on three initiatives and one conference

#### Helping Michigan's Women Veterans

Over 50,000 women veterans currently live in Michigan. Many may not think of themselves as "veterans" because they may not have served in wartime or in a combat-specific role. But, if a woman served in the military, she is a veteran. We do not have much information about our women veterans. We need Michigan-specific data to help advocacy efforts. We are currently compiling data from an online survey that we conducted and will be sharing the results soon. We are partnering with many community and regional organizations to raise the profile of Michigan women veterans.

#### Raising Awareness of Human Trafficking in Michigan

Some of our Commissioners have helped form Regional Task Forces across Michigan that coordinate, facilitate and participate in awareness programs and projects including legislative and legal initiatives. Commissioners are also active in bringing awareness of human trafficking to Michigan's medical community.

#### Advocating for Increased Participation of Michigan Women on Corporate Boards

Advancing women to corporate board positions has a positive impact on the business landscape. Commissioners are enthusiastically pursuing connections with organizations and corporate board recruiters in identifying and promoting qualified senior female leadership.

#### Young Women, Strong Leaders Conference

The Michigan Women's Commission partners with MI-Ace Network for Women in Higher Education and the Michigan Department of Education to hold a conference for young women, encouraging them to be tomorrow's leaders. This conference highlights non-traditional careers and the science, technology, engineering and math fields. The 2015 conference will be held on the campus of Central Michigan University on April 3.

We tweet @MiWomensComm  
Facebook at [www.facebook.com/miwomenscommission](http://www.facebook.com/miwomenscommission)  
Our website: [www.michigan.gov/womenscommission](http://www.michigan.gov/womenscommission)